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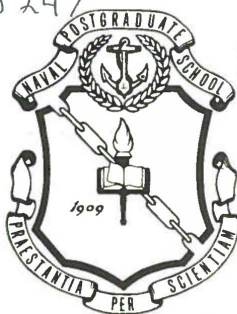


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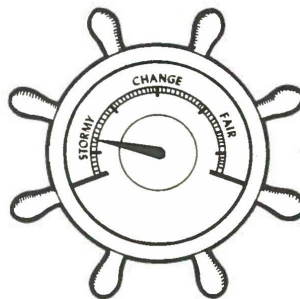
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**BAROMETER**



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The BAROMETER is a student weekly newspaper for the exchange of ideas and information concerning the development and improvement of the professional environment at the Naval Postgraduate School. Items of interest, papers, and articles of interest to the students, staff, and faculty as a whole are solicited.

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"An enemy who can cripple one-third of your crew and wipe out your OPTAR demands your attention. If that enemy were another fighting force, you had better believe that you would know everything there is to know about it before engaging it." Quote from Feature Article.

EDITORIAL COMMENT: Commander Jeremy R. Tappan is the author of our feature article this week. He is a graduate of the NPS and is a naval aviator. In his capacity in the Alcoholism Prevention Project Office, Bureau of Naval Personnel he writes this article in a light manner that strikes deeply.

## FEATURE: HERE'S TO GROG!

"Grog.

The seafarer's drink of song and chantey. Our traditional beverage.

But grog is more than sea-spary, sails, and swords. Grog is also alcohol.

And what do we do with the drunken sailor-the pilot, FBM firecontrol technician, chief ordnanceman, doctor, snipe, admiral, messcook, parachute rigger...?

You may begin to sense that there is no intention of hoisting any tankards here. Even so, maybe you have a Personal reason for reading this.

Is it because you have an uneasy feeling that the Navy is dependent on alcohol-is an alcohol pusher?

Is it because your skipper, your exec, your department head, your division chief, petty officer, leading seaman, or the new recruit has cause you trouble at one time or another when he or she could not 'handle' the booze? Or, closer to home, is it because booze is moving in on your mother, sister, brother, wife, daughter, or your son?

Or are you reading this because the title made you feel good about our traditional wetting-down parties, drinking the dolphins, beer busts, wine tasting nights, vodka blizzards, initiations, mess nights, Friday noon liquid lunches, champagne brunches, 'mustering' at the O'Club or the Chief's Club, hard-to-refuse prices at the package store, and our happy, (happy?) hours ...? That must be it.

Because, of course, you don't have a problem, and besides...

And besides, 'I don't want anybody on my ship who can't hold his liquor!' And furthermore, 'I don't trust a man who doesn't drink!'

Well, for whatever reason, personal or professional, you are reading. So, while I have your attention, let's look at some rather shocking figures from a recent and important research effort.

A pilot study indicates that 38 percent of our Navy has self-reported serious life consequences because of frequent overdosing of alcohol. These serious life consequences are such traumas as: you've been passed over; your wife has walked out or threatened to; you've been arrested; you've had too many accidents; or you are really hurting, physically or emotionally or both.

And that doesn't even include those among us who need-that's right-who need several slugs a night to be 'ourselves' again. Did you say, 'Well, maybe we do have a problem?'

"It takes real guts-not Hollywood blood and guts' not the Cubi Point 'march on the O'Club' guts-but real guts to drink straight ginger ale in this man's Navy. Or even to have only one or two cocktails or beers and call it quits. Real guts.

Sometimes, I don't really want a drink. But rather than stand around emptyhanded at our many Navy socials, I feel like I have to fool the crowd by keeping something that looks like booze in my drinking hand. In good company I feel I do not have the choice to take it or leave it. Not with people I like or want to be liked by. And I wish I could.

What kind of pressure is it that gives me this feeling? It is everywhere you go in today's Navy. 'Hey, man, the coke fountain is at the pharmacy down the street.'

Not only that but it hurts me, now that I know the facts about the subject, when I see many friends abusing booze-and frequently. Because now I know that too many of them either are sick or eventually will become sick to the point of developing a dependency upon the drug if the overdosing continues.

So, what do I do about it? Try to shut down the clubs or eliminate happy hours? No! Carry Nation and her prohibitionists were nuts. Drinking can be healthfully enjoyed. Although alcohol is a drug, it has value when maturely used. It lubricates socially, it sedates, and it soothes. But a great number of us either do not or cannot use this drug safely. This is especially true for those 9,000,000 (and counting) neighbors in the United States and those 50,000 to 100,000 shipmates who suffer from the disease of alcoholism and for whom alcohol is literally a poison. Also included in this group who cannot use the drug at all are millions of recovered alcoholics who, with great strength, defend their worthy lives against the encroachments of amoral hucksters or well-meaning friends."

While the 38 percent figure reflects combined officer and enlisted results, 47 percent of this category were enlisted men and 26 percent were officers. This enlisted-officer 'actual problems' ratio is odd because when we examine the 'potential problem only; typology, we find just the opposite: that twice as many officers as enlisted men are categorized. Remembering that these statistics reflect self-reported consequences of drinking, this contrast raises a question: Is there any less drinking by officers or just more reluctance to face the problems it is causing?

The statistics also show that the greatest number of alcohol abusers are the younger, more junior enlisted personnel. In addition, 21 percent of these junior (below E-6) enlisted men who admitted having job-related drinking problems within the last 3 years also admitted having been 'high' or 'tight' on duty one or more times during that period.

Something is becoming clearer here. Do we expect our young sailors to be 'steamers'?

Further, regarding performance of duty, a relatively high proportion of both enlisted men (27 percent) and officers (22 percent) reported alcohol-related inefficiencies, such as putting in only a part of a day's work or substandard performance. Businesses and industries which are aware of employee alcohol problems are also familiar with the 'high-priced half-man'-a highly paid executive or manager with alcohol problems.

It is a frightening thought that 38 percent of our force is so seriously affected by excessive drinking. It is especially frightening when you consider that 40 percent of this number-or 15 percent of our Navy-will go on to become confirmed alcoholics. And an alcoholism rate of 15 percent should make it the Navy's number one health problem.

But everyone knows that statistics can lie, and maybe these do, too. Certainly they are hard to prove, because statistics are not people. They are not easily related to yourself or your shipmates. So you can scoff or laugh them off, if you need to.

Therefore, let's not count any more heads; let's count something else-money. Over \$189,000,000-annually-in poor job performance alone.

That is quite a bar bill. That is what we in the Navy are swilling down-your OPTAR or 113 dump trucks full of greenbacks in job inefficiencies and everyday snafus, missed movements, Casreps, non-'Zero Defencts,' and other botched jobs. And that doesn't even touch the costs of medical treatment or the replacement of personnel who have to be mustered out or nursed along to early retirement. Throw in a few serious accidents, such as a midair collision involving F-4's, even without fatalities and pilot replacements, and the price really soars.

And what about the costs we can't measure-what about the familites, the kids? Fifty-two percent of all of today's alcoholics are the children of alcoholics. That is some heritage we are pouring them. That's right-heritage, not heredity. For better or worse, if they watch their immortal, omnipotent parents solving all of their problems with alcohol, what do you expect the kids to do when the hassling starts? If, peeking over the banister at our famous Navy socials, they see liquor as the only obvious requirement for a party, you can hang up Emily What's-her-name or any parental guidance to the contrary-your kids know what 'grownups' do.



In fact, we make drinking a badge of manhood, don't we? 'Can't drink 'till you're a man, son.' And once you are there, if ever you can't hold your liquor through all of our good-time Navy social traditions and customs, look out! You are no longer a man!

But let's back up a bit. What about alcohol? Why all the fuss? What is it and what does it really do?

Simply stated, alcohol is a depressant drug. It is also legal, as you know, and it ought to stay that way. Alcohol and ether have similar chemistry. Just remove one molecule of water from two molecules of alcohol and you have ether. Stimulate you? You may think so, but no way. It will knock you out, a little bit at a time. Ethanol. That is what you are drinking. Ethyl alcohol, the causative agent in all alcoholic beverages. And, although it takes many years and an M.D. after your name to be an anesthesiologist, anybody can self-administer alcohol.

Of course, when too much alcohol is self-induced, coffee is usually prescribed-lots of coffee. Unfortunately, coffee may just keep that person, now with reduced judgment and reactions, awake long enough to get behind the wheel."

"Let's face it. There are differences between a shipmate who is dependent on alcohol and the moderate or even heavy drinker. The former isn't trying to prove his manhood any more or even to drink you under the table. He needs greater amounts of the drug now, even though he may be without the obvious behavioral impairments normally associated with such amounts. But take his supply away from him and he may experience dramatic changes in behavior and perceptions. He may suffer from severe tremulousness, hallucinations, confusion, delirium, convulsions, and, at the extreme, death. That's right-death. Even withdrawal from heroin addiction doesn't do that!

It is obvious that abuse of this drug is the major factor leading to problem drinking. And the 4 out of 10 ratio, previously referred to, of frequent excessive drinkers who will eventually become dependent upon it was not casually used. Many authoritative studies have established this rate.

Did you say, 'But aren't we (?) doing something about this? Isn't the Navy...?'

Probably not. Because from where you sit, YOU are the Navy. If somebody else's Navy is doing something, well ...what is that to you? Besides, isn't the following really your policy?

'Full support and cooperation will be given to the person who can successfully conceal his or her alcoholism from the attention of Command.

'Such premiums will include leave, liberty, job security, promotional opportunities, fringe benefits and, when eligible, full retirement.

'However, if that person becomes so sick that he cannot conceal his illness, then he shall be punished and/or separated from the service without benefit (unless we can hide it for him to retirement).

It's not your policy? That is commendable. Speaking only for myself, as a one-time commanding officer, it used to be mine.

Of course, somebody else's Navy is doing something about this situation. There are over 1,000 volunteer recovered alcoholics in the Navy's referral network, a vital part of the Navy's Alcoholism Prevention Program. Many of them have recovered from alcoholism through the Navy's treatment and rehabilitation facilities. This network is helping shipmates and their dependents who are in trouble with alcohol, but it is available to aid commands, as well, in connection with preventive education, identification, and alcohol counseling."

"The cost-effectiveness of the Navy's treatment and rehabilitation program is unbelievable, and cannot be examined in detail here. To give you a hint, though, the cost savings of successful rehabilitating three pilots and getting them back into their cockpits again early last year at one ARC was \$1.5 million! And how much would it cost us to recruit and train replacements for the 2,050 alcoholic inpatients alone who were successfully restored to full duty just last year? The cost analysis estimate is in the hundreds of millions! Yet, the total Alcohol Program treatment costs annually are only \$4.9 million. And we haven't even mentioned the 9,000 outpatients treated in the program last year!

From a purely management viewpoint, the Navy's alcohol program is probably the most cost-effective Navy program going other than possibly the Safety Program. It just does not make sense, for example, to muster out our seasoned and experienced people who have developed an alcohol problem. Separating these casualties immediately establishes the need for replacements, but at a much greater cost than the expense of rehabilitation.

But are you convinced that the alcohol problem can be managed effectively? Probably not. That is one of the biggest stumbling blocks in the alcohol education program's efforts so far--convincing top and middle management that the problem can be managed to the Navy's benefit and should be so managed."

"It should be noted that an alcohol education program, is required by both the Secretary of the Navy and the Chief of Naval Operations in their directives on the subject to be implemented at all levels of command.

But then SECNAV and CNO require a lot of things to be 'implemented'...

Besides, you've got the conn. Not them.

Yet, can you honestly say you know enough, right now, to be effective? With all respect, I doubt it.

You can learn, though. And you can do something, if you really want to. Something for yourself, your wife, your kids, or your men. Even for your seniors (even for them!).

That CNO directive, OPNAV Instruction 6330.1, is in the files somewhere. Do what you want with it.

And there are books, pamphlets, movies, and seminars. And there are people!

Do you know a recovered alcoholic--one of those people? Sit down with him. You'll learn more in an hour from a recovered alcoholic who knows you care than from all the articles in the world. I don't promise you it will be comfortable finding out how you, unwittingly, have contributed to the development of his illness, but it might help you from doing it again.

But, Skipper, good intentions aren't enough. If you're pursing your lips, nodding portentously, and intending to shuffle this onto your XO, who will, of course, finesse it on to his...well, so much for "delegation." When that routine is over, the only people who really learn something are those three confused messcooks on the fantail.

You do not have something better to do!

An enemy who can cripple one-third of your crew and wipe out your OPTAR demands your attention. If that enemy were another fighting force, you had better believe that you would know everything there was to know about it before engaging it.

But go ahead. Have your grog. Have as many as you don't need. Or as few as you want.

Because, remember, the problem is not alcohol. It is its abuse.

So, please start looking around. Look at your clubs' profit motives and how they go about ensuring business. How do the hours and condition of your special services recreational facilities stack up against your clubs? Where is the emphasis?

Take a hard look at your next unit party, CPO initiation, wetting-down, or mess night; because they are valuable to the Navy team and we should have them. But what is the real purpose of those longstanding Navy traditions and customs? We've got more swizzle sticks than stacks and flagpoles.

Finally, I think you know, now, what we do with a drunken sailor. We treat him. But what we do about the potential ones depends on you.

And nobody else."

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